

Get Smart Fast: U.S. Education Beyond the 50 States

Why does this topic matter?

Did you know that educational services and funding in the United States extend to include 10 entities beyond the 50 states? This diverse group of locales and communities brings unique perspectives and rich cultures to the “national” education conversation. The U.S. Department of Education’s (ED) responsibilities include allocating federal funds, ensuring compliance, providing technical assistance, and monitoring and reporting. By providing these helpful resources, the federal government helps bridge the gaps to promote equitable educational opportunities for every student, as supported by the [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#).

What do we mean by jurisdictions?

The Comprehensive Center Network uses the term “jurisdiction” to describe U.S. territories and commonwealths and the freely associated states. They include:

Name	Type of Jurisdiction
America Samoa	Territory
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico	Territory (commonwealth)
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	Territory (commonwealth)
District of Columbia	U.S. federal district
Federated States of Micronesia	Freely associated state
Guam	Territory
Republic of Palau	Freely associated state
Republic of the Marshall Islands	Freely associated state
U.S. Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)	Schools operated or funded by the BIE
U.S. Virgin Islands	Territory

Note that the terms “insular areas” and “outlying areas” are both used by ED to refer to American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Furthermore, the freely associated states are sovereign nations that have government-to-government relations with the U.S. through Compacts of Free Association.

How are the jurisdictions supported?

Supporting organizations within and through the U.S. Department of Education include:

[Office of Indian Education \(OIE\)](#): administers the Indian Education Program of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by ESSA (Title VI, Part A), which establishes policies and provides financial and technical assistance for supporting local educational agencies, Indian Tribes and organizations, post-secondary institutions and other entities in meeting the special educational and cultural related academic needs of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

[Coordinator for the Outlying Areas](#): serves as the principal advisor to ED on federal matters affecting the outlying areas, evaluates the needs of education programs in the outlying areas, assists with the coordination of programs that serve the outlying areas, and provides guidance to programs within ED that serve the outlying areas.

[The Comprehensive Center Network](#): supports all 60 states and jurisdictions to identify, implement, and sustain effective evidence-based practices that support improved educator and student outcomes.

Supporting organizations within the U.S. Department of the Interior include:

[Office of Insular Affairs \(OIA\)](#): helps coordinate federal policy for American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to support the development of efficient and effective government, while also honoring unique histories, languages, and cultures. OIA also manages several federal funding programs for the insular areas that include discretionary technical assistance and Compact of Free Association funding to the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

[Bureau of Indian Education \(BIE\)](#): provides culturally relevant educational services, educators, and supports to 183 BIE-funded elementary and secondary schools on 64 reservations in 23 states, serving approximately 40,000 Native students.

Additional funding:

- [Rural, Insular, Native Achievement Programs](#)
- [Consolidated Grants for Insular Areas](#)
- [OIA Discretionary Grant Programs](#)
- [OIE Discretionary and Formula Grants](#)

For more information and helpful resources, visit <https://compcenternetwork.org/>

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